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IMPORTANT WORKS

BY

J. H. WEISSENBRUCH

ON TUESDAY MARCH 1 1904  
THE HAGUE.







1904  
Mar. 1

CATALOGUE  
OF  
IMPORTANT PICTURES AND DRAWINGS

LEFT BY  
J. H. WEISSENBRUCH

1824—1903.

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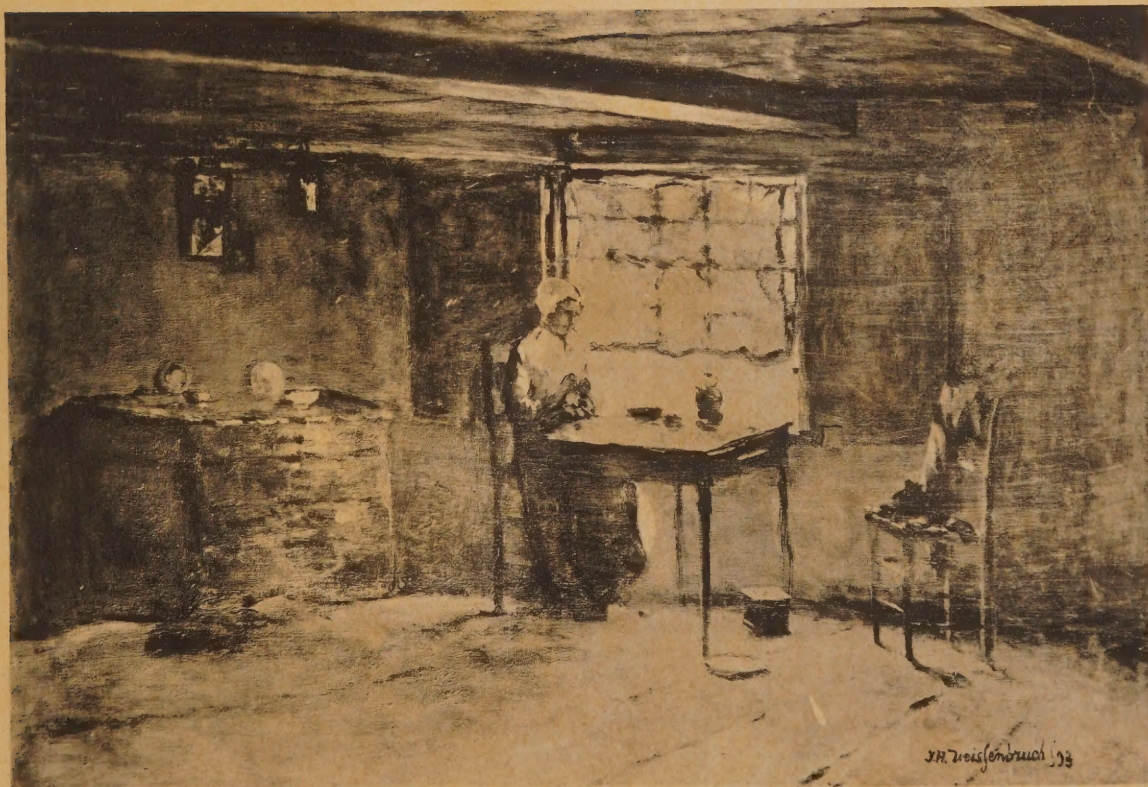
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J.M.W. Turner 1843

LICHTDRUK EMRIK & BINGER, HAARLEM







## J. H. WEISSENBRUCH.

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Among the group of Dutch painters who, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, claimed for Holland its old reputation, WEISSENBRUCH eminently stands out, as a representative man.

All the painters of the elder group: ISRAËLS, BOSBOOM and the MARISES, only to mention some of the best, represent a bias of their own, a style which in spite of great similarity, shows a distinct difference. And although in this new realm of artistic beauty, many a foreigner may stand doubtful and mix up a NEUHUIJS with an ISRAËLS, a MARIS with a MAUVE, we Dutch people know, at first sight, to distinguish between those very characteristics that make them stand apart.

Each of those worthies fills a place of his own in our estimation and admiration; in hours of quiet musings, memory calls up before our mind's eye, all they accomplished and even should there be one, we specially love, this will not, in justice, diminish the others' fame, nor cause their glory to wane. We have, so to say, from our childhood breathed the very atmosphere of their art and we have learnt by intuition, both what unites and what separates them. We could not imagine the Hague-school without the half revealed, half hidden poetry of the intimacy of home-life of an ISRAËLS, nor without his deep psychological insight; neither without the Olympian repose and the wide expanse of a JACOB MARIS, whose works may rightly be called the poetry of a beautiful order in chaos; nor without the classical grandeur of a BOSBOOM.

But would this eminent group of painters, who above the vapours of our low lands, send forth rays of light from their very soul-life, making all one unextinguishable glory, be complete, without the most original of all those gifted men, without WEISSENBRUCH, with his grand simplicity,



with the overwhelming freshness of his enthusiastic temperament?

It is a known fact, to what an extent our painters, still young, as they may be called at that time, were enthusiastic admirers of the Barbizon school. Of many of them, belonging to the Hague-school, work is to be found, either in public galleries or in private collections which is ranked with the so called French time.

The ideal after which the Barbizonians strove had set them an example . . . they went to nature for inspiration and should one ask to which period in art is theirs most akin, one naturally goes back to that of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to the grand time of the old Dutch painters, to the cradle of modern art. From Holland it was, that the great wave of inspiration rolled over England, over France, to eddy back to Holland; and Holland most intimately one with that glorious time, knew how most purely to carry on the old tradition, remoulding it into a new style.

Whereas the work of the English, at times, rouses reminiscences of that of the old Netherlands and of the art of the Italians; whereas also the French show many a resemblance with that old work, modern Holland outwardly seems to stand most apart and still, careful analysis, closer following up the track that leads to the very essence of things, the most intimate connection will become evident. The repose, the self-possession, the innate soberness, the consummate carrying through of the subject, the power to give to the imagined, to the abstract, "a local habitation and a name" (Shakespeare), remain intact, as real characteristics. Still always a consummately complete composition moves round a conceived centre, and it is to the old Dutch Masters and only to them that we must go back to find — be it in another form, — that unconscious striving after making the things appear in, plunge them, as it were, into a bath of light and darkness: after all the only and certainly the most effective schema of the art of painting. The reputation of that *clair-obscur*, the new Dutch maintained to a wonderful degree. From the luminism of the old painters, its new form: tonalism has developed itself as an historic and rational fact. And it is just that which, for the second time, makes our Dutch school stand unsurpassed.





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WEISSENBRUCH has never, through all his career, become unfaithful to that originality which was such a special characteristic of his. A contemporary of ISRAËLS' and BOSBOOM'S, just to mention a few of the pioneers of modern times, he did not find all at once, what is called a well-prepared soil. Like others he had to free himself from the silly laws of an all over-ruling opinion which was killing to all pure artistic notions. Schelfhout, at that time an authority, took pleasure in his work and invited him to come and work in his studio. WEISSENBRUCH went straight to BOSBOOM who advised him above all, to remain true to himself, and to go to nature for the right understanding of the origin and the very essence of things.

If we repeat here what in various articles, has been over and again said of the painter, it is only to show how the tide was already at its turning point and that, with the younger generation, a new conviction was forcing its way. But there is still something else that shows him what he was. I, who so to say have to act as executor and must make an inventory of the artistic property left by him, have nowhere, in none of the great number of studies, paintings and drawings, found anything that strikes one as a direct French influence. At the outset he seems to have followed in the wake of the best of his immediate predecessors, but above all has he, from the beginning, put into practice what in painters' cant is called: modelling oneself upon nature; BOSBOOM'S advice to him consequently struck but a kindred note. In a picture, "A View on the Dunes", which at the time was sold to the Teyler-Gallery at Harlem, and exhibited at a picture-show, in '49, seemed to strike into a new line "Its natural expression caused it to make quite a different effect from his usual work", thus we read in a catalogue issued by the Firm FRANS BUFFA & SON in '99, when an exhibition was held of the painter's works at Amsterdam. Judging from a letter of one of the trustees of the Teyler-Gallery, stating their satisfaction at the new acquisition, we are led to suppose (a thing proved by many studies and pictures of the same period) that at the time he was a very earnest and elaborate copyist of his own ideals. Exactly 50 years later at the above mentioned exhibition, again a picture of his was bought for the Teyler-Gallery. And it is interesting to see the distance there is between that



early production of half a century ago and the other; half a century of indefatigable struggle and strenuous efforts lying between. Fully to ascertain how far WEISSENBRUCH underwent foreign influences is not easy, at least not from what there is of him in our public galleries. And then he was one of those natures that on influences from without, at once put a stamp of his own and the success of others rather stimulated his creative powers, than that it led him to imitation; and even in Holland it is more difficult to mention artists who, through their works, had any decisive influence on his development, [to the extent that traces of it are visible,] than to point to quite a number of younger landscape-painters who all, more or less, have allowed themselves to be led by his idea of art and who have learnt much from him. So one of his greatest merits was that he breathed fresh life into a dull period. He grew to be one of the pioneers, who as with a clarion-voice, roused a sleepy conventional time to new activity; one of those whose merit it is, not only to have opened a new period, but to have brought it to a glorious height. That after the culmination-point there was a decline, was not his fault. He with others till the end, held the banner high.

Comparing it with other arts, the art of painting has been called that of the soul. In the latter part of the former century there have been a great number of painters, who painted from conviction, from the very depth of their souls, who painted "because they must" (Tennyson); painters for whom it was an unceasing necessity to express in ideal colouring and beautiful form, what life, with its concrete and abstract forms, pressed upon them.

Comparing him with the other painters of the Hague-school, not one of them may, more justly, claim the name of **painter**. He is one, all over. There is a set of artists who — nothing unpleasant is meant — may be best characterised as gentlemen-painters. WEISSENBRUCH was a painter-painter. In his work no trace is found of the intellectual, which is sometimes enlisted into the service of art, but which on the whole is injurious to the picturesque. The beautiful with him is purely pictorial. The story goes that one of the greatest French painters should have boasted





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of having had so little schooling and without detriment to his fame, he could do so; what is now-a-days called learning, has nothing or little in common with real wisdom. One of the most celebrated German philosophers, if not the most celebrated, by preference mixed with "the poor in spirit."

Simplicity always has something that may be called innate wisdom. In the light of this inborn faculty, nothing looks confused. Those who possess it, generally have a clear insight into things which, unconsciously shows them the right way in what would puzzle a more complicated nature. They generally have a very characteristic conception of their own about things and usually an extraordinary strong conviction. They are what one calls: characters. But within the range of their mind, they develop a many-sidedness which is astonishing. To each of their actions they give the glow of a new originality. In what they full-consciously begin, they rarely, if ever, fail. And consequently what is left of their work, speaks of a strength and a freshness that will live on.

In the time of their first efforts, they often remain in the background, not quite unnoticed; at times constantly praised, but all the same more or less obscured by the present fame of others; till the energy of their nature entirely carries it, and their work comes more and more in relief. They grow the object of general attention and have a brilliancy of their own, borrowed from none.

Such, more or less was WEISSENBRUCH'S case. In the latter part of his life, he is said to have shut the door of his studio that he might not be disturbed by picture-dealers or picture-collectors, who wanted to buy his work half finished.

When one considers what sort of things he painted, one comes to the conclusion that it was always landscapes and nothing but landscapes. Even from his town-views comes wafted towards us, the sweet-smells of nature. In the catalogue of the artistic property he left, we find mention made of a picture representing the interior of a house, in which the mysterious, almost audible silence without, broken only by the clacking of knitting-needles, seems to be filled with atmospheric reflection.



There are a whole series of this subject, of course variously treated in each picture, but in which the in-door atmosphere is diffused with the sentiment of nature and in which, through the green of the foliage and the light of the sun, he succeeds to rouse the illusion of infinite space. There are sheds, backs of houses with pots, pans and kitchen-gear and some pecking hens, which he has seen as bits of still-life and in which the echo of the constant activity of man and nature is felt; in which through chinks and cracks the glimmer of the wide sun-flooded world shines and in which atoms of gold-dust seem to be dancing in one small slanting sunbeam. Town-views he painted, dusky harbour-quays, wrapped in yellow-green and ruddy evening-light. We think here of some houses at the outskirts of a suburb, standing out against the wide expanse of a high, faintly lit-up twilight sky; houses on which rain, wind and time have furrowed their marks on the gables, with the solitary outline of a single figure, weather-stained standing out, weird-like in the vague creeping up darkness; remote parts of a town against the night, when the outlines of things silently melt together in the cavern-like darkness; and against the fickle shreds of light, in an effectful sky, the gossamer-like tackle of a ship dooms up; lonely quarters of a town when the rough elements search every nook and corner, and the flapping of a loose green shutter frightens; or at other times, longing for sweet summer-smells, under a blue sky, with a single luminous cloud softly feathering away: a sky faintly green with the reflection of far away meadows.

It was not the new parts of a town, nor a new house that had a charm for him. What was old and weather-stained, especially outskirts of a suburb, where nature had not been entirely driven away, and the quays attracted him most. The houses bear the marks of time, show signs of the activity and the impress of the life within and without. Each house has, so to say a history of its own; it has something to tell, it is picturesque; in every moment its beauty shines forth. And just because in every moment, it is the historian of times past, the moment can be caught that is beautiful, because impressive, or interesting because replete with unusual expression.

WEISSENBRUCH had the faculty of seeing the town as a bit of nature. MARIS could also do it, in his way. Who lacks that faculty does not understand the intense beauty of a town.

With SHAKESPEARE nature means all that exists. We know that his contemporaries fought this opinion. They did not understand that great men who open new vista's, and with it unknown perspectives, know how to encompass both the ideal and the real, making the ideal a reality and reality an ideal, through the power of their imagination. Also the great Hague-painters, amongst whom WEISSENBRUCH had such a distinct position, advocated that opinion; also they understood that the ideal is the very truth, the very essence of reality.

A philosophic nature like RUISDAEL, a born profound thinker, loved the woods and cataracts, that natural scenery which long captivated the most superior minds; but his bleach-fields near Harlem, belong to the finest specimens of landscape-painting. Long before the French naturalists expressed their réalism, there flourished in Holland, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century an art, which equally knew how to unite, fancy and reality, the imagined with the ideal and who brought an echo of real nature into art, such as up to then the world had not known. It is Holland which both in art and in other respects has taught Europe: to see the ideal of the real, and to raise the real to the ideal.

Only lately a learned German, who had investigated the matter, acknowledged the influence, the 17th century art of painting had had on GOETHE and his time. And every new art, if it will reach the highest, the most ideal perfection, shall have to learn how to see as a reality the ideal, as the concrete beautiful.

As to this the Barbizonians had nothing to teach to the Dutch.

In their own country the sentiment of the real, had found expression in a much wider meaning, already in REMBRANDT; there was a difference only in date, little in essence. WEISSENBRUCH proves that one could do without any influence and his work which so essentially bears the mark of the Hague-school, sufficiently shows that also the art of the others was really a plant of their own soil, and that the period in which the French



art of painting flourished, strictly speaking, had no other meaning for us, but that of a new stimulus.

Just now we have called WEISSENBRUCH'S art, that of the landscape-painter, an opinion towards which we feel, generally speaking, inclined. I believe we may look at it also from another side, if for landscape, we read nature, a word that widens the idea. WEISSENBRUCH was one of those modern artists who have thrown down the wall between country and town. They have brought home to us; make us feel, that in a higher sense both may be called nature, that they really are one; and in doing so, they have greatly widened our view. What he called nature was for him the idea, the ideal, it was the reflection of his soul, his passion, the realisation of a whole world of feeling and thought that lived within him.

In a deeper sense it was the world itself.

RUISDAEL formulated a natural religion in his pictures; in the same way each of the great Hague-painters, laid down their own confession of faith. What they gave was their opinion, their conviction, the very essence of their creed. The formulæ varied, but they worshipped at the same altar. It was the altar of the unsearchable, the invisible, the religious, if you will. But in this line of thought, it is best called the Beautiful, which they tried to grasp in a momentary apparition and which at another moment would look more beautiful still, as it assumed form again.

So we have to deal with a painter of uncommon and undisputed originality and this originality was of too noble a stock, ever to degenerate into a dangerous mannerism. This may be called a proof of extraordinary, of inexhaustible strength in a man who made his way himself, and never was influenced by others, but in an indirect, a pardonable way.

From what his biographers tell us, we can imagine the man. Rather tall, thin, constitutionally strong and muscular, proof against all influences of climate and of weather; reddish hair, and ruddy complexioned with being much in the open air in all sorts of weather. Like most people, who do so, he talked rather loud. As the man was, his way of talking was, full of verve and pith; he could typically describe and tell enthusiastically and lively. And when he was quite in it, when he entirely gave himself,



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one could see that he once more lived through the thing he described with so much fervour, glow and pith.

A peculiarity of his, as people tell us, was strongly to pronounce the "r" a psychologist by profession, a person who likes to get to the bottom of things, might conclude from this, that he was a man who lived in a world of thought and imaginings, one who, when roused from his dreams and made conscious of the world round him, with that half absence of mind, peculiar to great thinkers, liked to dwell long on his words, because they link him to the reality.

Always striving to express himself in a pithy way, he probably liked fully to accentuate his words, and happened to have a special predilection for those which had an r in them. He had an other peculiarity or rather a pardonable weakness. Through his frequent intercourse with his Flemish friend and pupil Bauffe, in the latter years of his life, he often interspersed his conversation with French expressions, perhaps often artistically descriptive. When any one knocked at his simple studio, now and then bade him enter, crying: "Entrez", but on the other hand, he was one of the most thorough admirers of the most intensely Dutch of all Dutch books the "Camera Obscura", a book in which characters and things through their typifying qualities stand out as in a clair-obscuré.

His love of that book is a matter of course. Himself humorous and close observer, few like he caught typical expressions of the lower classes, and much that escaped others, found in him an apt ear. Excellent story-teller he was; the peasants would sit listening to him, all ear and eye, in the snug evening-hours near the fire or under the lamp of Noorden's village-inn, where the painters now and then met, or would be dumb-struck, at his dexterousness in conjuror's tricks with cards or money.

One can imagine him as a generally known man in that South-Holland watery district, where by preference he stayed in spring or in autumn, under effectful skies, floating along in a little boat or wandering through country-lanes, all overgrown with reed, brush-wood and pollard trees, all the while watching the beautiful sky.



Though now representatives of a younger generation, carrying on the master's tradition, attract a number of young wandering artists, like flies round the alluring light of a lamp, it was WEISSENBRUCH who at that time was the creator of those typical Noorden conditions, where he roused the enthusiasm of such a multitude of paladins that even in the evening-hours; he was sure to be surrounded by a large number of eager listeners. Or they were spent in solitary musings, with no other companion but his faithful pipe, of which the wreathed smoke carried along the thoughts to fantastic regions, the fairy-land of the imagination; and in the indistinct hazy atmosphere of the room, through which the tranquil light of the lamp sent forth a glorious bundle of rays, the day-task was finished. All the impressions received in the day stood out vividly in his memory, and beautified by distance, took shape and grew to one or more conceptions, only waiting for embodiment on canvas or paper. WEISSENBRUCH whom as we shall see was a great lover of effects; of heavy, threatening clouds breaking over a land, rich in water and reed, spent the days when the sky was all one monotonous grey in fishing; and he knew how to prepare a well-seasoned dish of what he had caught, in a way gratifying to the most exacting tongue; at other times he and a number of his cronies went on long explorations, better to get acquainted with that part of the land.

A young painter who for a time, seems to have been one of the party, has noted down some of his experiences. If his statements are accurate, WEISSENBRUCH was something of a king in those regions. For squire he had a half idiotic boy from the village who was inseparable from him. He followed his knight in the latter's struggle with the elements, through fair and foul weather, in days of sunshine and of showers, more faithful to him than the famous Sancho Pancha, and perhaps therefore less known.

The real discoverer of that region was not the painter, but the lover of nature, who called the attention of the painters to that secluded part of the land, visited only by rain and wind. They went to have a look at it; then regularly came there; at last settled down for longer or shorter time and

thus that forgotten part of the land, grew to them a realm of unexplored beauty, ever revealing to them new features in its pools and reed; its meadow-borders; its country-paths and pollard-trees; its weather-stained cottages and typical population, all wrapped in a vapoury atmosphere, in which the breaking sunbeams touched the clouded sky as with a wizard's wand; in which moonlight and twinkling stars spread a mysterious splendour over the land nebulous with the rising vapours.

The subjects to be found were numerous and various, every moment giving a new aspect to the scenery. I know of a painter, who was inspired to paint a number of pictures, varying in composition and sentiment all on one subject, which he had seen from different sides, at different times and in a different light, and who still liked to borrow from it. The body of WEISSENBRUCH'S works, if one had accurately traced it, would have taught the same. The Dutch painters have been called one-sided. It is very easy to treat different subjects in a different way and an artist who paints home-scenes, sea-pictures, portraits and what more, has not, on account of that, given a proof of his many-sidedness. Does not it, on the contrary, speak of an unusual many-sidedness which one might call an inward one, to see, to compose the same subject so differently, that no one is at once struck with the likeness, even should he think it a thing of any importance.

And the creative power of the artist, so entirely changes the outward aspect of the subject, that one must be well acquainted with Noorden or Nieuwkoop to find it, in natura. He will find there perhaps what strikes *him* as beautiful. WEISSENBRUCH'S beautiful, considering what a highly original painter he was, shall he found mirrored only in his pictures and drawings. In them lies the pictorial beauty of this country, such as he saw it in reality and in his dreams.

The fame of WEISSENBRUCH seems to be specially bound up with the characteristic villages of Noorden and Nieuwkoop, and yet this is by far not the only part of Holland from which he borrowed subjects. The environs of the Hague, amongst others Dekkersduin, which still at this moment attracts quite a new set of young and older painters; the beach



near Katwijk, the village Noordwijk, the environs of Harlem and the villages of Houtum and Heerle in Limburg, had a great attraction for him, both in the earlier and the later part of his life.

Besides did he paint as we saw, town-views, home-scenes, in short everything where the voice of nature was, everything that was picturesque. And he always knew how to give to his subjects, so different in character, a typical expression, which rendered it impossible to mix him up with others. A *WEISSENBRUCH* strikes us; it has a charm of its own, in harmony with the subject it treats. The originality of the maker speaks from it; the healthy vigour of his mind, the dash of his temperament and the unfaltering conviction with which he expressed what filled him, at the time he was painting.

Already in the young artist we see developing that resolute, that thorough and yet so delicate treatment of his subject. The earliest-dated of his pictures, that I remember having seen, seem to have been inspired direct by nature. In very few of them we can notice that quasi-romanticism which, half a century ago, filled the empty hearts and heads of a spiritless generation, only acquainted with the oil-and paint-smell of a studio and that, in hours when memory conjures up before the mind of a real artist what he has seen in nature, adorning it with all the glow of an artist's enthusiasm, knew not how to imagine, the beauty of a transformed reality, transformed through a self-born inward vision. From the beginning nature was his all in all.

The old Dutch painters may have taught him the notion of a systematic plan-distribution. In some of those early pictures with downs, heaths or wooded parts there is a little that reminds one of *RUISDAEL*. Sitting on the top of a high down, his young fantasy wandered over the scenery round him. It was his season of meditation, out in nature, with a head full of ideals and intense, youthful energy, which does not seem to have lessened with the years.

From the beginning there is substance in his paint-mixture; his way of expression pithy and sometimes hitting off the thing wonderfully well. We see how numerous details, not overlooked by a sharp observer, through diligent study and constant perseverance, gradually find their



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exact places and meaning in the whole composition, and as time goes on, his style develops into that brilliant simplicity which is the character of his later periods, a simplicity that astonishes and that can only be the outflow of his character and of a long and close intercourse with nature; in her outward features nothing seems to be strange to him. And yet every time she places him, over and over again, before new problems.

In his earlier works, one notices what an eye he had for effects. lit-up trunks of trees will fantastically stand out from the heavy deep brown and green of a down-scene. Light-effects flit across a field, kept sober in tone and from which the white of cows flashes up; at other times, it is only the sky that is effectful.

It is remarkable to see from many of those studies and pictures, how well already at that time, he felt the significance of atmosphere and sky above the landscape. These is interchange between sky and earth, the one is decisive for the other. As soon as the sky grows all absorbing, the significance of the landscape diminishes. For those who know our great Dutch landscape-painters, who have made a study of them, the close union will be clear. "Light and air," thus WEISSENBRUCH later spoke from the book of his great experience, "are the great magicians; it is the sky that gives, the character to the picture; painters can never enough look at the sky. All things we want, come from above. We live from light and sun-shine and with our palette, we pass through the dry showers." Has ever painter expressed his creed more compactly and at the same time more graphically described his rambles?

We have said that the field of action of the Hague-school is infinitely great and that it is not limited to one part of Holland. JACOB MARIS wandered all over Holland, reflecting it in grand work. WEISSENBRUCH, more than he, chose certain portions for his field of study; he made himself one with it and in a pithy way gave us the type. As to the landscape itself, his pictures are the most striking and the purest representatives of impressionism.

Would one try to define their characteristic differences, one might say, approximately, that JACOB MARIS spiritualised, whereas WEISSENBRUCH gave nature as he found her. To the one, JACOB MARIS, nature speaks through



a vision, to the other WEISSENBRUCH directly. At the same time it is a fact that in both, the natural and the visionary are equally balanced and harmonious; but one might call the art of MARIS, the reality of the beautiful and that of WEISSENBRUCH the beauty of reality or reality raised into the sphere of the beautiful.

The art of painting is the art of flitting moments. One moment but of the ever changing aspect of nature, she can give. In that one moment she must grasp all the expressiveness of nature and show it as a unity. The picture must reflect the reality, not as it really is, but as the painter imagines it. So it is a representation of the reality, the semblance of it which the art of painting gives.

Experience has taught consciously or unconsciously that the schema of proper distribution of light and darkness, of perspective plans such as we find it in the clair-obscur, naturally leads to the best issues. The Dutch school having put it in practice, most completely and most generally, has come nearest to express the reality of things in the purest way. It will be superfluous once more to dwell on it, that also in an ideal sense, she has reached an unparalleled height.

Impressionism has kept in honour the laws of the clair-obscur and carried them through in a very original way.

We have already stated, that the clair-obscur represents the schema of the art of painting. Even as the poet, in following the laws of rhythm and composition, seems to be fettered, but in reality is absolutely free and independent, the painter's allegiance to the clair-obscur gives him that divine liberty, which detaches him from the everyday's world and makes him soar high into the realm of imagination.

Also in the landscape the clair-obscur has been carried through. REMBRANDT, with his wonderful imagination, has made use of it in the most striking way. Among the earlier painters, we find it in RUISDAEL, HOBBEEMA, VAN GOYEN and in more others; it is of the moderns, JACOB MARIS and WEISSENBRUCH who each in his way, have in landscapes known most typically to act up to it.

The characteristics, the qualities of WEISSENBRUCH's art, which we have

indicated, secure him a very place of his own in the Hague-School. Allowing for the features, painters of one period have in common, on account of certain unwritten laws of the time they unconsciously obey, every one who deserves the name of artist, paints in a way, most in harmony with his talent. In WEISSENBRUCH the painting is smooth and glossy, although he can handle the brush both roughly and delicately-elastic; passionately he can brush away, either from a sudden impulse, or work with that wonderful soberness, betraying the inner glorious flame of restrained ardour. There are water-colours of his on which he has been sponging, brushing and scratching away, making havoc of everything, that all traces of the conception can no more or hardly be guessed at; but there are some, of such an easy flow, of such an unruffled spirit, some that have been completed, without the paper showing a trace of such a constant metamorphosis.

His palette, most simple, with only the most indispensable, had for every emotion, that may overwhelm an artist, the required colour. From it he produced, in an always striking tone, his incomparable moist, rich, brilliant or toned-down varieties of green, his pearly grey, his passionate or tender white, his rich, genial brown, his expressive purple and all the glow of an atmospherie, always varying sky. For everything he found the only, the just expression, and the enviable secret of bringing about great effects by simple means, no one knew better than he.

Just as every artist of the right stamp, he considered the drawing as something very important, and in a certain way it is in his pictures, as compositions, the backbone of the whole. But one would form a very wrong opinion of him, if one thought that drawing with him meant an outlining of the plans, a reproducing of light and shade effects in a schoolmasterly way. If that were meant we could expect very little drawing in an evening-landscape, painted with brushes of one inch and a half thick. No, drawing with him was something quite different, a much more essential thing. Drawing with him was, justly, only a means. Shifting atmospheric impressions, had to be fixed on paper as they were flitting away. A mere impression was sufficient. The line was not an indirect



help; no anxious, slavish reproducing of the thing seen, but spontane, suggestive. In a water-colour of his, I saw the lines springing from the colour-effects and running through and against each other, which was the only prominent indication of any drawing in the whole composition. Well in all pure art and also in that of painting, it is only a question of proportions, of tone, of colouring, all of which must be in perfect harmony. The line must not be frozen; it must move, thrill, be all tremulous with the emotion, that gave life to it on paper or canvas. It must, rythmically lose itself, in the distance and remain wrapped in atmosphere, just as the things do in reality.

Consequently the opinion we hear trumpeted about as to the modern masters drawing so much worse than the ancients, is entirely unfounded. Their manner of drawing has so to say logically developed itself from that of the past. It would not be difficult to show on rational grounds, that their drawing is more truly akin both inwardly and outwardly to the work of the 17<sup>th</sup> century artists, than to that of the so-called classics, which work in its apparent logic construction is nothing but a lifeless form.

Few painters have as WEISSENBRUCH approached the natural way of expressing nature. Few have like he "the weather" in their work. The atmosphere, in Holland wrapping all objects in a haze, softening the sharp outlines; subduing too glaring colours, causing the former to speak to you of deeper sentiment and greater harmony, and the latter to glow and tremble with a subdued but rich splendour, is also in WEISSENBRUCH'S pictures all predominating.

The Dutch have been said to draw "*in minor*." Their work looks indeed more reserved than that of other nations. But when we analyse every decimetre of painted canvas, we shall find in the Dutch, the colour to be infinitely more composite and the apparent unobtrusiveness to be the result of an incomparable mastery.

It would not be difficult to daub a canvas of some metres in square with glittering, flaring colours, out-rivalling any competition. The first requirement of the art of painting is, above all, to make the whole speak



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to one in the most natural way. And here in our country where it has lost all its decorative character, and grew detached from what surrounded it, the colour never grew obtrusive, for the sake of architectonic surroundings, which it was meant better to explain; where colour grew to be a means of showing, in unbroken unity of action, a whole world of human beings, animals and things, specially theirs, in their every-day's life, in the atmosphere of their own climate.

In all decorative art, the colour is more or less there for its own sake, it is ornamental with an underground of an imagined thing or a thought, never fully blending them. In the art of painting it is the "*means*" to create things, the life-expression itself and entirely one with them.

And as every thing is better understood "*für sich*," dan, "*an sich*," better in its relation to the general, for the same reason, the colour grew to be of deeper meaning.

Analyse one of WEISSENBRUCH'S skies, of him who so well understood its expressiveness; one of those skies of his later period, grand and simple in which all superfluous details are treated as trifling; they will captivate your attention at once, and on examination you shall find in them a thrilling and glowing world of colours, restrained for the sake of the unity of action.

Before every sky there is an enormous atmospheric depth, which multiplies its colours and adds to their splendour. Considering the meaning of atmosphere in a picture, which implies more space than what in an academic sense is called drawing, the colour must be kept in subjection. And just here there are instances where, in spite of all its reserve, it assumes that serene splendour and glowing depth, we find in the pictures of no other country.

Already young WEISSENBRUCH understood the significance of atmosphere. He who naturally had an open eye for light-effects, for the powerful contrasts of our changeable climate, could not but be struck by it.

"Storm and rain thunder and lightning," he said of himself, are my elements; one must watch nature at work; out I must, I put on an old coat, wooden shoes, a sort of hat, and off I am. When the showers abate,



just a few scribbles in charcoal or crayon to remember what one has seen. In working them out, tone and colouring naturally come back.

Another excellent way of studying nature is to row through the polderland. To sit painting in a little boat, with the water in the old tub, a little pipe between the lips, nothing more jolly for a painter.

That hits off the very life of one of the painters of the old set. It tells us how he was out in fair and foul weather, and always was in close contact with nature. The same air he breathed, is wafted towards us from his pictures. He who as he expressed it "first wanted a slap in the face, from nature", could not work without her light shining in his eyes and her voice in his ears.

Under spotless blue skies, sea and pools lie monotonously still. But in spring and in autumn the big cloud-masses doom up, and drifting along in ceaseless course, they wrap the landscape in alternate light and darkness. It is in those seasons that the breaking sunbeams bring about the most wonderful effects. The same mysterious light and darkness, in which Rembrandt wrapped his portraits gives to our natural scenery that magic splendour, which never ceased to attract our best known painters. We have the hazy distances, through their vague outlines suggesting eternity and the magic glow of lit-up horizons; rows of mills apparently touching the horizon, and overwhelming in their lonely grandeur; the small, square and slanting, red or black painted water-mills, weather-stained by the elements, standing out as ghosts against the dark back-ground when a chance light just touches them; the mighty darkening cloud-shadows flitting over the land, or a streak of light, shooting towards the horizon, over gold-coloured reed, lonely willows and small knotty trees, over dark-tinged peat-heaps, covered with reed and rushes, over solitary houses or a distant sail; the elements that shake and toss whatever stands in their way, stamping it with the ineffaceable work of time; the weather-stained farms and labourers' cottages on a canal, standing out against an horizon of brown bull-rushes, under an ever shifting sky. Here and there; the white of a goat or a cow, or a gate, or linen on a bleachfield, flits up from the land; or a white-scrubbed washing-tub near a dark canal or

the white of a woman's cap, stands out against the deep red of a house-wall.

Oh, WEISSENBRUCH's white, it could be tender or threatening. It was transparent with the sky, tender and warm with the sunlight, ominous under a thundercloud. The right knowledge of all that white means, might tell us what kind of sky there is over the landscape: clouded or clear, shifting or monotonous. It is a standard for the mood in which it was painted, a barometer for the weather.

From WEISSENBRUCH's later period date a few of those landscapes with mills, cows and pollard-trees, described also in the auction-catalogue of the works left by him. The field is very systemetically divided; the big lines of the sky over it are powerfully balanced. It is day-time, but the landscape partly darkened by cloud-shadows. In the profound blending of the toned-down green, the effectful white of a cow, which splendidly breaks the monotony of the surroundings. This white is painted with a melting tenderness. It is twilight, the sky partly overcast, and where the light prevails, full of subdued rich reddish-brown tints.

The field lies solitary in its evening colouring. But from the vaporous, atmospheric darkness, that seems to creep over the landscape, faintly glimmers the white back of a cow, mysterious and magic. Such like light-effects predominate over the sentiment: Light-effects on the green limits of a field, standing out against a horizon of dunes or on distant sails, where the sky seems to touch the sea, in one of those sea- and strand-pictures, painted in rich pearly grey; or another in which a rider on a white horse, Don Quixote-like dooms up from the shadow of a town-wall. Those are the pictures that strike through an originality, unique in modern landscape-painting. No one has painted them as he did, with that pure and exceptionally true expression. It was striking, just as the green tone of many of his pictures; a result of his constant studying in the open air but also an outflow of his nature.

People like to call him the painter "par excellence" of the fresh, the frank, the clear, the spontane, of the quick eye and the ready hand. Still it will be good to get to know him also from another side, not that here he loses his characteristic qualities, but he shows them in another way.

It can only add to his high reputation, to his fame; and the appreciation of this uncommon talent will prove to be even more deserved and gain in depth. It will bring out that also in many-sidedness he was great and how susceptible to impressions; very few can utter them in such an absolutely pure way.

I remember one of his pictures which was the centre of the exhibition, held by the firm of BUFFA and which certainly belongs to one of his best works. Under an overcast, heavy-clouded sky, an almost utterly lonely heath, lies stretched out; against the horizon rise the impressive forms of wind-mills, one of which is shrilly lit up; almost ghostly with its wings, fighting the high wind that like a shiver passes through all the landscape. On the first plan near a pool, lights up, weirdlike, the toned-down, white of a cow. Far from a so-called spontane vision, the painter has here full-consciously striven after saying, straight out, the mystic and the sublime there is in nature. If one wishes to call this his frankness one unvoluntarily touches the truth. His clearness then is the deep insight he had in the mystery of life; the intuitive wisdom, with which he has expressed it. For also here is an altar raised to the artistic beauty of things, a beauty that is above the vulgar meaning of the word and here we may learn that life's problems can be solved, only by the inward faculty of the soul: to see the beauty of the world, beautifully.

I also remember from mentioned collection a very remarkable picture, an "interieur": in which the figure of a busy house-wife seems to be the only living creature. But no, there goes through the whole scene a whisper of mysteriousness. The twilight seems to flit to and fro, envelops all in a gossamer-like glow; deepens under the subdued white of a tile-panelled chimney, weaves round the faintly lit-up objects in the room, and sets the whole aglow with a vague splendour. It is a weird scene, a confusion of darkness and light; a strange murmur sighs through the room, there is a noiseless riot in dark corners, and the old woman in the centre of all that weird stirring and whispering, sits as if lost in this ghost-like world. Here we are in the sphere of the mysterious, which not many have felt and which only a few have been able to express.

But even the not mysterious, the sun-illuminated every-day's world, he





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has seen with an enthusiasm, which causes the colours and forms to stand out more harmoniously beautiful. Near a poor red brick cottage, close to the moist green of a ditch, a woman dressed in something of a violet-like colour, is busy washing-out linen. One may call that very uninteresting, but through the warm grey atmosphere thrills such a charm of poetry, there is such a suggestion of mystic tender light, that we see only the beautiful light effects, making all shine and glitter as in a fairy-tale.

When in the former century, French art strove after realisation of her ideals, she modelled herself in much upon German art; against classicism, she especially, sought support in Holland and in Flanders.

The world of her imagination which she peopled with new unknown forms, was closer akin to ours than formerly was the case. And so Holland when she roused herself, together with the other nations; she found herself in a not altogether strange world and fulfilled her task calmer and more self-assured than any of the others. She went for inspiration to the old German ideals, found for the old gest a new form, and again Holland's fame spread far and wide.

This explains how WEISSENBRUCH found in Holland the earth fit for his growth; he need but breathe the atmosphere that surrounded him. But the earth was fallow-land, it had to be ploughed; however a glorious past had left its traces and a whisper went over the land full of promise for the future. There was a general struggle against classicism that had well-nigh strangled art and against a world of would-be romanticism.

WEISSENBRUCH joined in that fight. "Nature, nature," grew to be his battle-cry. In the high sense in which he interpreted it, nature was his all in all; she was his world, the reflection of his soul-life and in that way he aided to establish that devout worship of nature, which fills the hearts and minds of a new generation.

We saw how he undauntedly fought against the elements. The old German spirit truly lived and relived in him, be it in another form. He worshipped nature, her secrets, her grandeur; no one has more attentively listened to her voice, no one has more passionately adored her light. He has glorified her with that impulsive



ardour, which gives such an inexpressible freshness to his work, the expression of eternal youth; but also with that tender sentiment of a poet's emotions, which throws over the world of reality the glamour of romance and which teaches in visions the verity of life.

His temperament showed him the way, an unshaken conviction supported him and thus he grew to be what he was, one of those painters by the grace of God, to whose share fell, as a gift from heaven, an uncommon talent and who have only to act up to their wonderful impulses and always fresh inspirations to fill the amazed world with the imperishable beauty of their works, to their own inextinguishable glory.



N. 99



N. 92

LICHTDRUK EMRIK & BINGER, HAARLEM





		high		wide.
1.	Pasturage . . . . .	13	inch. ×	8½ inch.
2.	Canalway . . . . .	13½	" "	7½ "
3.	Cornfields . . . . .	12	" "	8 "
4.	The Country Road . . . . .	9½	" "	12 "
5.	Canal view . . . . .	15	" "	8 "
6.	Strand. . . . .	14½	" "	8½ "
7.	Church at Noorden . . . . .	10	" "	6 "
8.	The Sandpit . . . . .	7¾	" "	4½ "
9.	Farmyard . . . . .	14	" "	9 "
10.	Watermill . . . . .	10	" "	7 "
11.	Canalview . . . . .	13	" "	8 "
12.	Milking . . . . .	13½	" "	9¾ "
13.	View of a Heatherfields . . . . .	13	" "	8¾ "
14.	Milking hour . . . . .	13	" "	8 "
15.	Bleaching. . . . .	10	" "	12½ "
16.	Sunset. . . . .	12	" "	11½ "
17.	Windmills . . . . .	16½	" "	7 "
18.	Canalway . . . . .	17	" "	8 "
19.	Pasturage . . . . .	15¾	" "	8 "
20.	Cloudeffect . . . . .	16	" "	10½ "
21.	In the dunes . . . . .	15½	" "	11 "
22.	Farmhouse . . . . .	16½	" "	12 "
23.	Under the trees . . . . .	6	" "	7 "
24.	Duneland. . . . .	9	" "	6 "
25.	Marshy ground . . . . .	6	" "	3½ "
26.	Farmhouse . . . . .	7	" "	3¾ "

	high.	wide.
27. In the dunes . . . . .	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
28. In the meadow . . . . .	8 " "	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
29. Pond in the wood . . . . .	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " "	6 "
30. Farm-yard . . . . .	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " "	6 "
31. Cloudeffect . . . . .	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
32. Kitchengarden . . . . .	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	6 "
33. Windmills . . . . .	9 " "	5 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
34. Marshy-water . . . . .	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	6 "
35. Landscape . . . . .	8 " "	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
36. Farmhouse . . . . .	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
37. Cornfields . . . . .	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	7 "
38. Panorama . . . . .	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
39. Marshy ground. . . . .	11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " "	7 "
40. Labourers dwellings . . . . .	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
41. Marsh . . . . .	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " "	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
42. Marshy Landscape . . . . .	14 " "	6 $\frac{1}{5}$ "
43. In the marsh . . . . .	16 $\frac{1}{5}$ " "	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
44. The village-street at Noorden . .	17 $\frac{1}{4}$ " "	13 "
45. Marsheywater . . . . .	16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	10 "
46. In the wood. . . . .	16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	11 "
47. Polder . . . . .	16 " "	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
48. Doawbridge at Noorden . . . .	13 " "	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
49. Prospective . . . . .	13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
50. Farmhouses . . . . .	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	12 "
51. Interior . . . . .	12 " "	8 "
52. The Stone Mill. . . . .	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	8 "
53. Farmyard. . . . .	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " "	9 "
54. Interior . . . . .	16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
55. Through the wood . . . . .	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	8 "

		high.	wide.
56.	Panorama . . . . .	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> inch.	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> inch.
57.	Labourers, dwelling . . . . .	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	8 " "
58.	The mill at evening . . . . .	12 " "	7 " "
59.	Farmhouse at Noorden . . . . .	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
60.	The water-side . . . . .	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	12 " "
61.	River-scène . . . . .	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "
62.	Grazing cows . . . . .	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	7 " "
63.	On the canal . . . . .	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
64.	A sunny day . . . . .	14 " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
65.	At the foot of the dunes . . . . .	13 " "	8 " "
66.	On the Canal . . . . .	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "
67.	Twilight . . . . .	12 " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
68.	A scene in the distance . . . . .	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	7 " "
69.	Evening . . . . .	14 " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
70.	Farmyard . . . . .	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
71.	Farmhouse . . . . .	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	8 " "
72.	Church at Noorden . . . . .	11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "
73.	Looking under the bridge . . . . .	8 " "	13 " "
74.	The Dike-house . . . . .	12 " "	8 " "
75.	The sailingboat . . . . .	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "	7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "
76.	Twilight . . . . .	16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	12 " "
77.	Farmhouse . . . . .	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	25 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
78.	Interior . . . . .	40 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " "
79.	Twilight . . . . .	15 " "	20 " "
80.	Farmhouse . . . . .	10 " "	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
81.	Strand . . . . .	11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
82.	Marshymeadow . . . . .	13 " "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "
83.	Near the harbour . . . . .	20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " "	28 " "
84.	Draw bridge at Noorden . . . . .	27 " "	19 " "



		high.		wide.
85.	Shellfisher . . . . .	18	inch. ×	15 inch.
86.	Landscape in the dunes . . . .	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	" "	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
87.	Canal. . . . .	26 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	18 "
88.	The artist's Garden. . . . .	27 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	23 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
89.	The large mill . . . . .	50 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	41 "
90.	Marshy landscape . . . . .	40 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
91.	Bridge at Noorden . . . . .	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	18 "
92.	The Harbour Quai . . . . .	24 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	16 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
93.	Marshy landscape . . . . .	49 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	34 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
94.	Bridge at Noorden . . . . .	18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	13 "
95.	The old stone Bridge. . . . .	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	5 "
96.	Cows. . . . .	9	" "	6 "
97.	Gray day . . . . .	11	" "	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
98.	At the foot of the dunes . . . .	14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	8 "
99.	On „Dekkers” dune . . . . .	26 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	16 "
100.	Pollard willows . . . . .	10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	" "	7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
101.	Watermills. . . . .	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
102.	Dwellings on a Canal. . . . .	16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	" "	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
103.	Mill . . . . .	14	" "	8 "
104.	Strand . . . . .	20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
105.	Dutch landscape . . . . .	7	" "	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
106.	Sunny day . . . . .	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
107.	Landscape . . . . .	28	" "	40 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
108.	Canal View . . . . .	28	" "	40 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
109.	The shellfisher . . . . .	36 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	" "	26 "







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